REMARKS

Claims 1, 5 and 7-29 remain pending in this application.

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to more clearly point out the invention. Specifically, these claims have been amended to point out that the number of carbon atoms contained in the molecular chain from the nitrogen atom in the urea bond to the branching point is 1 to 7 including the carbon atom at the branching point. Support for this amendment can be found, for example, at page 10, lines 5-16 of the specification. In addition, these claims also have been amended to point out that the total of the number of carbon atoms from the branching point to the nitrogen atoms corresponding to isocyanate groups is 3 to 20, including the carbon atom at the branching point. Exemplary support for this amendment can be found on page 10, line 27, to page 11, line 10, of the specification. Accordingly, no new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 18 and 27-29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hosokawa et al. (JP 2000-230032). While the Office regarded that each of the features of these claims was described by Hosokawa et al., all of these claims have been amended by virtue of the amendment to claim 1. As amended, the claimed invention is characterized in that the isocyanate component (b1), which is a monomeric component to form the coating resin, contains a polyisocyanate group having a structure wherein the nitrogen atoms of the icocyanate groups are connected to the branching point "via a linear or cyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group which may optionally contain an ester structure," as recited in claim 1. This relationship is illustrated in Figures 1-3 attached to this reply.

On the other hand, as shown in the attached Figure 4, the polyisocyanate compound of Hosokawa et al. contains a nitrogen atom in the chains from the branching

point to the isocyanate group. Therefore, the chains in Hosokawa et al.'s polyisocyanate compound do not correspond to "a linear or cyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group which may optionally contain an ester structure" as recited in claim 1.

In addition, when considering one nitrogen atom to form the urea bond, the carbon number from said nitrogen atom in the urea bond to the branching point in the claimed invention is 1 to 7, the corresponding number in the examples of Hosokawa et al. is 11. Similarly, the total carbon number from the branching point to the nitrogen atoms corresponding to the isocyanate groups in the present invention is 3-20, whereas in the examples of Hosokawa et al., it is 31. Clearly, there can be no anticipation unless each and every element of each claim is found, either expressly described or under principles of inherency, in a single reference. The identical invention to that claimed in these claims is not described in Hosokawa et al. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 9-16 and 19-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Ishimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,833,226) and Hosokawa et al. The Office takes the position that Ishimura et al. teaches a core shell curing agent obtained by reacting the curing agent and an epoxy resin, but acknowledges that it does not teach the particularly claimed curing agent. As above in the anticipation rejection, Hosokawa et al. is relied on as teaching the recited requirements of the resin coating for the curing agent.

For at least the reasons advanced above, Hosokawa et al. does not teach all the features of claim 1, such that the combination of Ishimura et al. and Hosokawa et al. cannot meet or render obvious all the elements of these claims. The present invention

is characterized in that the molecular chain from the urea bond to the branching point has a low carbon number. This feature can result in a resin having short distance between the branching points, that is to say, a resin having a high mesh network crosslinking density. The high crosslinking density can prohibit the entry or attack of solvent from the outside of the capsule (i.e., coating resin) as well as the diffusion of curing agent from the inside of the capsule. Thus, the coating resin of the present invention has high solvent-resistance.

On the other hand, Hosokawa et al. has a high carbon number and this results in rough mesh network crosslinking density. Due to the low crosslinking density (i.e., rough mesh), when the capsule is mixed with ethyl acetate/toluene as in the storage stability evaluation test in the Examples of the present application, the solvent molecules attack the rough mesh crosslink of the capsule and the curing agent, and then the curing agent comes to be diffused from the inside of the capsule. Therefore, the material used in Hosokawa et al. results in reduced storage stability.

Since neither Ishimura et al. nor Hosokawa et al., alone or in combination, establish a prima facie case of obviousness, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Figures 1-4